

Church News Ireland



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Image of the day – Handbell Ringers welcome

Handbell ringers are a rarity in Ireland. Thankfully they are alive and well in south Down and this week they welcomed their new minister The Revd Andy Hay who was introduced as Priest-in-charge of the Grouped Parishes of Clonallon and Warrenpoint with Kilbroney on Monday 6 January 2025, The Feast of the Epiphany. See report and more photos in the Clergy and Ministry section below.

News

Founding member celebrates 17th Belfast BB's 70th Anniversary

During the past year the 17th Belfast Boy's Brigade Company celebrated it's 70th Anniversary. One person very instrumental in this is Jim Neill, Diocesan Reader and Synod member. Jim joined the Company when he was 13, and he has been researching the history of the 17th Belfast Company.

The Boys' Brigade first became connected with the Church of St John the Baptist, Upper Falls Parish, in 1922, when a Company was formed as 51st Belfast Company. Adam Kilpatrick served as Captain until the company lapsed in 1927 and the title was taken by Agnes Street Methodist Church.

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In 1954, the 17th Belfast Company was formed in the parish with the rector, the Rev Charles Jameson, as its first chaplain.

A Connor Diocesan Lay Reader for the past 45 years, Jim, was the first Sergeant in the new company. "I was a Staff Sergeant and was also a Lieutenant. I was working in an insurance



company at the time, so due to work commitments could not continue as an officer. We had a Bible Class which was held on Sundays before Church, and a football team. If the boys didn't come to the Bible Class, they didn't get onto the football team."

"It is a great organisation," said Jim. "It is Christian in principle, promoting the habits of obedience, reverence, discipline, self respect and all that tends towards a true Christian manliness. The motto is 'Sure and Steadfast.'"

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“ The Boys’ Brigade aims at nothing less than leading boys enrolled in its ranks to Jesus Christ as their Saviour, leader and friend.”



Cool view of Scotland from Connor diocese

Report received - There is no snow in Ballycastle but we can see snow on The Paps of Jura behind Rathlin.

The snow-covered Paps of Jura, Scotland sitting in the distance beyond Rathlin Island, captured by phone camera Monday morning in Ballycastle, County Antrim by Anne Kelly @anne_kellyart

North Strand Parishioner Among 2025 Nollaig na mBan Award Winners

Congratulations to Jean Denner of the Parish of Drumcondra, North Strand and St Barnabas in Dublin who is one of the local women being honoured today as

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part of the Nollaig na mBan Festival, organised by the North East Inner City initiative.

The festival celebrates inspirational North Inner City women on January 6th with music, arts, exhibition, dancing and more.



Jean is among 10 ‘mnasome’ women being honoured at the 2025 event. She is being recognised for her various voluntary roles within the parish of Drumcondra, North Strand and St Barnabas for almost 50 years including church warden, parish treasurer, branch leader and treasurer of Mothers’ Union branch. She has also had multiple roles in St Columba’s National School. Jean is a keen crafting, knitting, cross stitch, sewing and baking enthusiast. Jean uses her skills to raise money for the parish and fundraises for the people of Gaza. Jean has been married to Mervyn for over 50 years and enjoys spending time with their nine grandchildren.

Jean joins fellow local women in being recognised for their contributions. Eibhlín Harrington is the Project Leader at SWAN Youth Service, a community–led youth service focused on 10–24 year olds in St Agatha’s Hall, North Wall

and North Strand areas. Maeve Foreman has lived in the North Strand since 1986 and is one of the founding members of the multi award-winning Mud Island Community Garden. Kathleen Walker, who sadly passed away three years ago, always went out of her way to help people in the local community of Ballybough. Anne Gannon recently retired as Librarian in Charleville Mall Library, North Strand. Róisín Lonergan is the founder of the Five Lamps Arts Festival which is now in its 18th year and is a teacher in Marino College of Further Education.

Anna Quigley has been involved in community activism in the North Inner City since the 1980s and during that time says she has had the privilege of being part of amazing projects set up by inspirational leaders from the local community that respond to key issues that impact on our community life. Kirsty Fitzsimons has spent her working life in the music business and started a radio show on Anna Livia Radio, now Dublin City FM, when she found a place to call home on the North Strand in 1995. Aideen Leonard has always been a believer in community volunteering and is convinced of its benefits both on a personal level and in its power to transform communities. Kellie Harrington is a double Olympic gold medallist as an amateur boxer, winning at Tokyo 2020 and Paris 2024, making her the first Irish boxer to win consecutive Olympic gold medals.

Full information, including details of Nollaig na mBan events can be found on their website here:

<https://nollaignamban.ie/>

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Cathedral Calls



Cathedral provides support for those struggling to keep warm this winter

People struggling with energy bills and the cost of keeping warm over the winter are being offered support by one of the oldest Cathedrals in England.

Wells Cathedral, a heritage landmark in Somerset famed for its Early English Gothic architecture, has reopened its 'Warm Rail' – providing free donated winter coats and warm clothing, scarves, hats and shoes – to all who need them, for the third year running.

The Cathedral's café is also open during the week, offering free tea and coffee and a 'Warm Space' for people who cannot afford to heat their homes over the winter.

Alexia James, Commercial Operations Director for the Cathedral, said there was a constant throughput of clothes and coats through the 'Warm Rail' scheme.

"We wanted to do something to help people with the soaring cost of living and with their heating bills. The Warm Rail is popular and well supported. We hope this, and the 'Warm Space' provided by the café, will help to ease the pressure, if only by a small amount, on people's finances."

Camels lead to Epiphany services at Hereford Cathedral

Snow and ice did not stop three camels visiting Hereford on Sunday to take part in a church service outside the cathedral, Susie Rack reports for BBC News, West Midlands.

The animals were in Cathedral Close to mark the eve of Epiphany, a Christian feast day commemorating the visit of the three wise men to baby Jesus in Bethlehem.



The camels were ridden by three people dressed as wise men, to mark the feast of the Epiphany

Despite the cold, Bishop of Hereford, the Right Reverend Richard Jackson, said the Gobi Desert natives did not get the hump.

"They're used to very much colder temperatures than this, so I think they'll take it in their stride," he said.

The Bishop conducted the family-friendly services in the cathedral grounds at 13:00 and 14:00, with the animals walking around the congregation.

"Traditionally [the Magi] visited Jesus riding on camels, so it seemed a good idea to get some camels to come and celebrate with us," he said.

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His last service before he goes on sabbatical, the Bishop described it as "probably one of the more unusual" ones he had led.

"But, it's been a great joy, lots of people have joined in, it's been great fun," he added.

Two of the animals, who travelled from Joseph's Amazing Camels in Idlicote, Warwickshire, were ridden by their handlers Daisy and Leo Fossett.

Revd Canon Chancellor James Pacey, from Hereford Cathedral, donned a golden crown to stand in at short notice to ride the third.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c3wev90nvx2o>

Betty Drennan, Belfast Cathedral Choir

Betty Drennan joined the cathedral choir in 1964 when Harry Grindle was Cathedral Organist and Master of the Choristers.

Betty sang under a series of Musical Directors. She had the full support of her husband Jim, himself a fine singer and musician, in following and fulfilling her ministry of music.

Betty's funeral service will be held at the cathedral at 12.30pm on Friday 10th January, 2025.

Clergy and ministry



Kilbroney bells herald warm welcome for Revd Andy Hay

The Revd Andy Hay was introduced as Priest-in-charge of the Grouped Parishes of Clonallon and Warrenpoint with Kilbroney on Monday 6 January 2025, The Feast of the Epiphany.

Parishioners, friends, and colleagues gathered for the service in Kilbroney Parish Church, Rostrevor, which was led by the Area Dean, Canon Myrtle Morrison.



Guests from the local monastery

Andy takes up the role following his curacy in St Finnian's, Cregagh and his training rector, Canon Jono Pierce, gave the address.

Referring to the readings from Ephesians 3 verses 14-21 and Isaiah 60 verses 1-6 Canon Pierce praised Revd Hay for his many inspiring qualities as a gifted preacher, an outstanding pastor who stood with people in the best and worst of times and his gift in relating to people of all ages.

He encouraged Andy and the people of Clonallon, Warrenpoint and Kilbroney to be a prayerful people, a loving people propelled outwards by the love of God and a confident people, inspired not by their own abilities but by the Lord who sends them out in the power of His Spirit.

Meet Andy

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Andy was born in Japan, where his parents were missionaries. From the age of seven he grew up in Scotland, as his dad was ordained in the Scottish Baptist Church.



The Kilbroney Handbell Ringers

He studied Theology in Aberdeen University, and it was in Aberdeen that he met Jackie, who is from Northern Ireland. After graduation, he went on to qualify as a Primary School Teacher. He and Jackie have two children.

Andy was ordained Deacon for an internship in St Donard's Bloomfield in 2020 and moved to Cregagh in 2021.

He says, "I have found the transition from schoolteacher to parish priest a challenging and exciting one. I am thrilled to be taking the next step in this journey and am thoroughly

looking forward to serving alongside my new brothers and sisters in Clonallon, Warrenpoint and Kilbroney.

“My calling within the church, is to preach and teach, to minister to those in need and to disciple fellow believers through shared conversations, prayers and Bible study. I will also continue in allowing the Holy Spirit to deepen and nourish my own faith and understanding through personal studies and devotions.

“I am confident that as we serve together and love the Lord together, we will grow in faith together. I am confident too, that as this happens, we will grow in number as more people come to know the good news and love of our Lord Jesus.”

Pope names first woman as head of major Vatican office

Pope Francis has named the first woman to head a major Vatican office, appointing an Italian nun as prefect of the department responsible for all of the Catholic Church’s religious orders.

The appointment of Sister Simona Brambilla marks a major step in Francis’ aim to give women more leadership roles in governing the church.

While women have been named to number two spots in some Vatican offices, never before has a woman been named prefect of a dicastery or congregation of the Holy



Pope Francis has appointed the first woman to a major role in the Vatican

See Curia, the central governing organ of the Catholic Church.

The historic nature of Brambilla's appointment was confirmed by Vatican Media, which headlined its report: "Sister Simona Brambilla is the first woman prefect in the Vatican".

In an indication of the novelty of the appointment, and the theological implications involved, Francis simultaneously named as a co-leader, or "pro-prefect", a cardinal: Angel Fernandez Artime, a Salesian.

But the appointment, announced in the Vatican daily bulletin, lists Sister Brambilla first as "prefect" and Cardinal

Fernandez second as her co-leader, which theologically is necessary since the prefect must be able to celebrate Mass and perform other sacramental functions that currently can only be done by men.

The office, known officially as the Dicastery for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, is one of the most important in the Vatican. It is responsible for every religious order, from the Jesuits and Franciscans to smaller newer movements.

Sister Brambilla, 59, is a member of the Consolata Missionaries religious order and had served as the second in command in the religious order department since last year.

She takes over from the retiring Cardinal Joao Braz de Aviz, 77.

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

Celebrate St Brigid at Connemara National Park

Day to Celebrate St Brigid at Connemara National Park, Letterfrack, Co Galway on 8th February, 2025.

The Diocese of Tuam Killala and Limerick invite you to enjoy a walk along a scenic trail through nature, reflecting on her wisdom and spirit of renewal.

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Take the opportunity to watch / take part in making a St Brigid's cross - A cherished symbol of blessing and protection.

Have lunch in the cafe or bring your own picnic.

The day includes:



YOU ARE INVITED TO

A DAY TO CELEBRATE ST. BRIGID

AT CONNEMARA NATIONAL PARK,
LETTERFRACK, CO.GALWAY
FEBRUARY 8TH, 2025, 10:30AM

A WALK IN NATURE WITH
A SPIRITUAL MEANING

CELEBRATE ST. BRIGID WITH A SCENIC
TRAIL THROUGH NATURE, REFLECTING
ON HER WISDOM AND SPIRIT OF
RENEWAL. WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO
CRAFT YOUR OWN ST. BRIGID'S CROSS, A
CHERISHED SYMBOL OF BLESSINGS AND
PROTECTION.

FOR MORE INFORMATION,
CONTACT VALERIE AT SPIRITUALTOURISM@TLK.IE

PLEASE GO TO [TLK.IE/SPIRITUALTOURISM/](https://www.tlk.ie/spiritualtourism/)

- TO BOOK YOUR PLACE AT THIS EVENT
- TO MAKE PAYMENT FOR THE BUS, IF REQUIRED

NUMBERS ARE LIMITED SO EARLY BOOKING
IS ADVISED TO AVOID DISAPPOINTMENT

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Round trip transportation from Galway city (cost €20 per person to be paid in full when booking).

The day commences in Galway at 8.30am if travelling by bus. Bus departs from the Park 4.30pm for return trip to Galway city.

Book to register your interest and/or pay for the bus at TLK.ie/

Holy Year Pilgrimage to Rome

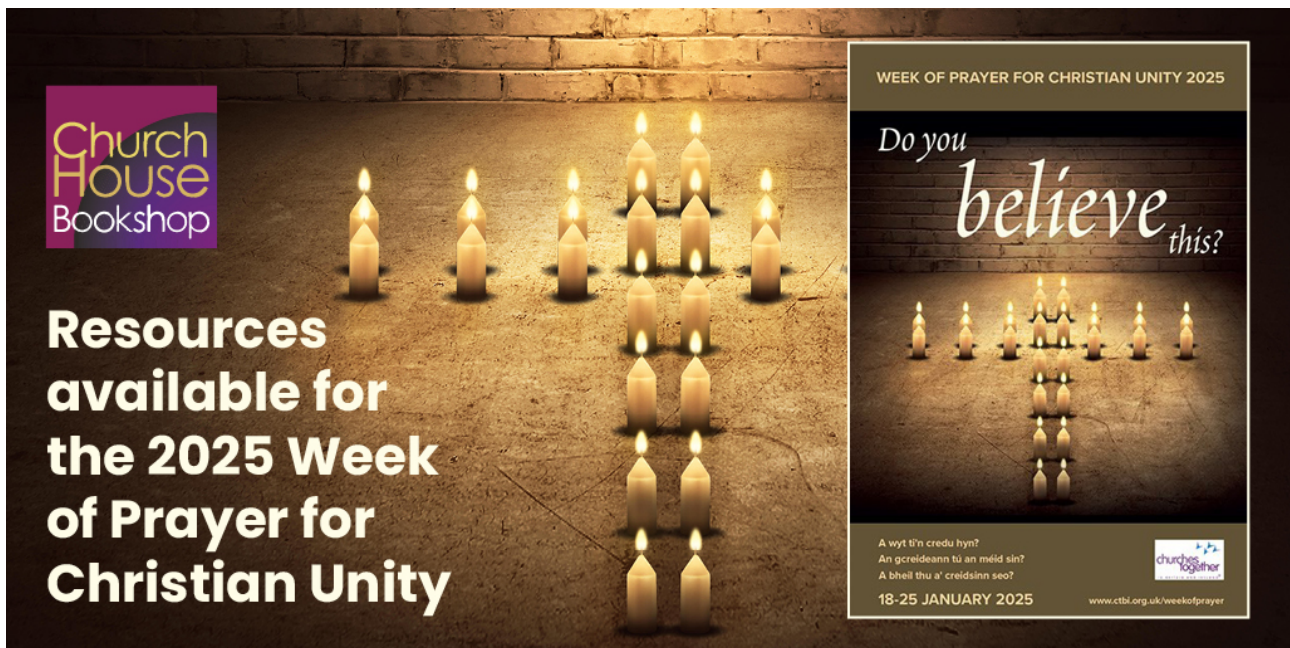
ACN invites - “Join us in the Eternal City May 7 0 12, 2025, to walk in the footsteps of the first martyrs of the Church as we join with Pope Francis and ACN friends from all over the world to commemorate the ‘Martyrs of Our Times.’ The Pope will grant a special audience to ACN friends and benefactors and lead us in a special prayer vigil at the Colosseum.”

€1045 per person sharing, Places are strictly limited, so book early to avoid disappointment.

To reserve your place, contact Marian Pilgrimages: Dublin: (01) 878 8159 • Belfast: (028) 956 80005 or email: info@marian.ie

Resources for Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

**The theme for this year's Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, 18 - 25 January, is "Do you believe this?"
Reflecting this, the scripture readings for this year**



focus on belief. View the full list of resources here from Church House Bookshop - web address below.

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is traditionally observed from the 18th to the 25th January – the octave of St. Peter and St. Paul.

The theme for the resources this year is "Do you believe this?"

For 2025, materials were prepared by the ecumenical community at Bose in Northern Italy. As we celebrate 1,700 years since the Council of Nicaea, the worship service has at its heart, the Nicene Creed. Reflecting this, the scripture readings for this year focus on belief.

We are invited to reflect on the story of Martha's confession of faith in Jesus as narrated in John 11:17-27. Each is called to sit with Jesus' provocative question to Martha: "Do you believe this?"

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2025 (English Pamphlet)

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity has a history of over 100 years, in which Christians around the world have taken part in an octave of prayer for visible Christian unity. A5 Pamphlet £1.75

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2025 (Large Print)

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity has a history of over 100 years, in which Christians around the world have taken part in an octave of prayer for visible Christian unity. A4 Pamphlet £1.75

World of Prayer for Christian Unity 2025 - Poster (pack of 2)

A3 poster (pack of 2) £2.25

Above available from Church House Bookshop

Tel - 01603 785918 (8.30am-4.30pm)

[<https://chbookshop.hymnsam.co.uk/features/week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity>]

St Ann's Dublin recitals

The recital series will begin once more on February 6th. Here is our line-up for the first half of February.

On February 6th, at 1:20 pm, Westland Trio Baroque Ensemble will perform Telemann sonatas.

The Westland Trio was co-founded in April 2023 with Naxos-signed pianist Professor Lance Coburn and young cellist Chen Ensheng and violinist Junhe Qiu. The trio successfully



completed concert tours. The performers at this recital will be Junhe Qiu, Ensheng Chen, and Celia Yizhen He Chu. You can find more information at <https://www.stannsrecitals.com/events/westland-trio-baroque-ensemble>

On February 13th, Thursday, at 1:20 pm, we will have the distinct pleasure of hearing the South Korean pianist, Hyewon Chang, perform Mozart, Schubert, and Schumann.



Her musical journey has seen her grace stages of international renown, including the Weill Concert Hall at Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, Hochschule für Musik und Theater in Munich, and the historic birthplace of Franz Joseph Haydn in Rohrau, Austria. Additionally, her performances have resonated through Rolston Hall at the Banff Centre and across numerous venues in America, captivating audiences with her profound musicality and technical prowess. You can find more details at <https://www.stannsrecitals.com/events/hyewon-chang-piano>

Heritage

Richard Turner, the most famous iron master of the Victorian era



The curvilinear conservatory at Carnagarve House is attributed to Richard Turner (1798-1881), Hammersmith Works, Ballsbridge, Dublin.

He was the most famous iron master of the Victorian era, most famous for Glasshouses at Kew Gardens, Botanic Gardens Belfast and at Glasnevin in Dublin. He took on commissions, big and small, from Railway Stations at Broadstone, Westland Row and Lime St., Liverpool to the making of fan lights and iron bedsteads. He employed



many workers who resided in fourteen ‘Turner’s’ Hammersmith cottages, near the works.

The Botanic Gardens Glasshouse, at Glasnevin, was successfully restored in the 1990’s . The OPW architects studied previous restorations elsewhere in Kew and Belfast. They dismantled the glasshouse, bar by bar, and tagged it. A report says 13 per cent were beyond repair, which were replaced by reforging 1840’s wrought iron from Kew, using a technique called drop forging. The replacement glass incorporated the natural imperfections of the original glass. They used a modern paint to protect the metal.

The Conservatory at Carnagarve is reported as having a “certain minamilism” like others he made country wide. Many examples of his work have been lost. From my knowledge, Carnagarve is the only example of his glass house work in the North West. A publication on



Longueville House- Its architecture and social history, states that the Turner Conservatory there was one of only four left in the world.

Turner's sons William and Thomas continued in the business, their father working post retirement, in the

background. St Mura's, Fahan and the Northern Bank in Derry are cited as Turner projects.

For a longer and even more informative read see entry in the Dictionary of Irish Biography -
<https://www.dib.ie/biography/turner-richard-a8681>

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

The publication of Church News Ireland is overseen by Very Rev Dr Houston McKelvey OBE, QVRM, TD. He may be contacted at houstonmckelvey@mac.com

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www.churchnewsireland.org

**Link in Monday through Saturday from
early morning**

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